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COORDINATION QUESTIONS: REPORTS OF THE COORDINATION BODIES

Annual overview report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination for 1992

Addendum

Summary of activities in 1992 of the subsidiary bodies of ACC and of ad hoc bodies convened under its auspices

SUMMARY

The present report contains brief summaries of activities carried out in 1992 by the subsidiary bodies of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC). The activities of certain ad hoc bodies that meet under the auspices of ACC are also described.

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Abbreviations

ACC	Administrative Committee on Coordination
AIDS	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
CCSQ	Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions
CPC	Committee for Programme and Coordination
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IDS	International Development Strategy
INSTRAW	International Research and Training Institute for Women
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
JUNIC	Joint United Nations Information Committee
LDCs	least developed countries
NGLS	Non-Governmental Liaison Service
SCN	Subcommittee on Nutrition
UNDCP	United Nations International Drug Control Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNISPACE 82	Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
WHO	World Health Organization

I. TASK FORCE ON LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

1. During 1992, the Task Force concentrated its attention on the following major issues: (a) review and appraisal of IDS; (b) alleviation and eradication of poverty; and (c) AIDS and development. These problems were considered by the Task Force and its Technical Working Group at their twenty-first and seventeenth sessions.

2. The Task Force recommended that, in the review and assessment of the Strategy, the United Nations system should take into account global political and economic changes in international affairs and national and international policies that have evolved since the adoption of the Strategy. The organizations of the system should contribute to the process in the form of regular monitoring of developments in their respective fields of competence and these contributions, rather than imposing additional reporting requirements on the agencies, should be viewed as an integral part of the review and appraisal of the Strategy.

3. Recommendations in the area of alleviation and eradication of poverty related to improving the monitoring of trends and collection of data on the subject. To strengthen cooperation and coordination of those activities, it was suggested that a high-level inter-agency meeting be held in order to devise common understandings and approaches towards establishing a set of social indicators, which could then be used for data collection on poverty for the system as a whole. The existing mechanisms for inter-agency coordination should be strengthened by reaffirming the lead role of the ACC Task Force on Rural Development, whose mandate should be extended to cover the whole range of issues related to poverty. Consideration should also be given to developing a system-wide plan of action for the eradication of poverty. At the country level, enhancement of the contribution of external assistance to development should be achieved by means of better harmonization of programmes and projects of the United Nations system with recipient government plans and programmes.

4. Regarding AIDS, the Task Force recommended that the organizations of the United Nations system cooperate closely to promote the goals and objectives of the WHO Global Programme on AIDS, especially in the areas of prevention and control. In view of the impending negative socio-economic consequences of the epidemic, it was suggested that research and study of the demographic and socio-economic impact of the disease should be intensified and appropriate policy responses should be developed.

II. TASK FORCE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT

5. At its thirteenth session, in 1992, the Task Force on Science and Technology for Development focused its attention on the development of innovative, action-oriented and realistic cooperation and coordination activities in science and technology within the United Nations system. The items of the agenda included, in particular, a review of the functioning and objectives of the Task Force in connection with changes in the international political and economic environment, as well as in the structure of the United Nations Secretariat; possible options for a coalition of resources for the

promotion of science and technology in developing countries; capacity-building in science and technology; new and emerging areas of science and technology for development; and interaction of the Task Force with the new Commission on Science and Technology for Development.

6. The decisions taken by the Task Force in the above areas emphasized both joint planning and programming from the early stages of conceptualization of new activities and the setting of priorities through a bottom-up approach, from the national and regional levels to the global level, within which the role of the regional commissions should be strengthened. On the subject of a coalition of resources, the Task Force established a small working group led by UNDP to help define its nature and modalities. As for new and emerging areas of science and technology, it was decided to continue to concentrate on the commercialization of biotechnology, particularly the question of intellectual property rights.

III. TASK FORCE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT

7. At its 20th meeting, in April 1992, the Task Force on Rural Development considered, among other items, the reports on the annual meetings of the Panel on Monitoring and Evaluation and the Panel on People's Participation, as well as the report of their joint meeting; the report of the Working Group on Industrial Contribution to Rural Development on its activities in revising the paper on issues and considerations of poverty alleviation through the development of rural small industries; the reports of 23 organizations and agencies of the United Nations system on their activities in rural development; and UNDP activities in two African countries concerning the implications of the Social Dimensions of Adjustment Programme for rural women.

8. The Task Force noted that there had been little progress in poverty alleviation and development in the rural areas of developing countries and recommended that future reports of the agencies should give greater emphasis to constraints in their rural development work. Having considered the third progress report on follow-up to the 1979 World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, prepared by FAO, the Task Force agreed that four-yearly Conference progress reports could serve as a useful mechanism for reviewing progress and trends in poverty alleviation; the integration of women in development; grass-roots participation in development; and other issues of prime concern to the Task Force.

9. The Task Force did not make any recommendations requiring the special attention of ACC. However, it took note of the views of the Task Force on Long-term Development Objectives concerning the lack of a mechanism for addressing the subject of poverty on a system-wide basis, as well as its recommendations to reaffirm the lead role of the Task Force on Rural Development in promoting inter-agency coordination and cooperation in the field of rural poverty alleviation and to consider extending the mandate of the Task Force to include issues related to poverty in general. Having recognized the strong links between urban and rural poverty the Task Force concluded that its mandate should remain firmly anchored in rural development and rural poverty, but could perhaps be enlarged to cover the linkages between rural and urban poverty as well.

IV. JOINT UNITED NATIONS INFORMATION COMMITTEE

10. During 1992, JUNIC continued to concentrate its efforts on coordinating information activities of the United Nations system on specific topics. The main issues discussed by the Committee at its regular (July 1992) and special (April 1992) sessions included cooperation and coordination in the area of public information within the United Nations system; financing of NGLS and Development Forum; revision of the guidelines for the participation by the United Nations system in international exhibitions; follow-up to UNCED; and observance of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

11. JUNIC submitted the following recommendations and decisions for approval by ACC:

(a) Taking into account the recognition by the United Nations system of the need to work more closely with the non-governmental organization community and the increasing importance of inter-agency cooperation, especially in the wake of UNCED, and in view of the excellent record of NGLS in fostering a dialogue between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations over the past 16 years, NGLS should become a jointly financed United Nations activity, based on voluntary and sustainable financial contributions;

(b) A working group should be convened on a system-wide publication on development issues to replace Development Forum. JUNIC agreed that the group, composed of the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and the World Bank, should look into all issues relating to a system-wide publication, taking into account interests and concerns of all JUNIC members;

(c) JUNIC approved the feasibility study on United Nations system participation at Taejon Expo '93 (Republic of Korea) and authorized the Coordinator to cancel participation if a satisfactory level of agreement with the organizers was not reached by the end of August 1992. Subsequently, a satisfactory level of agreement was reached;

(d) JUNIC adopted the text of the guidelines for joint participation by the United Nations system in international exhibitions submitted by FAO in consultation with ITU;

(e) As a follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, JUNIC agreed to carry out consultations among agencies of the United Nations system concerning future institutional arrangements for monitoring, implementing and coordinating issues relating to the environment and sustainable development, in order to ensure that any such arrangements included an appropriate information component.

V. SUBCOMMITTEE ON STATISTICAL ACTIVITIES

12. At its twenty-sixth session, in 1992, the Subcommittee on Statistical Activities identified four issues of major importance and brought them to the attention of ACC. The first concerned the review of the structure and operation of the global statistical system, including its coordination, that was being

conducted by the Statistical Commission's Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination. As part of the review, the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat had prepared a draft analysis of challenges and problems that had to be met by the Statistical Division and the global system as a whole in the four main areas of international statistical work: (a) statistical methods and standards; (b) data compilation, dissemination and technology; (c) technical cooperation; and (d) coordination. The second issue concerned the coordination of cooperation in statistical matters with countries in transition of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. The third issue concerned initiatives taken on the coordination of strategies for statistical development in Africa, as reflected in the Strategy for the Implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s. Finally, the fourth issue concerned UNDP plans to improve collaboration with members of the Subcommittee on the statistical aspects of the Human Development Report.

13. The Subcommittee also adopted decisions and made recommendations on:

(a) Policies of international organizations on adjusting nationally supplied data to improve international comparability and making estimates for non-reported data;

(b) Revision of the System of National Accounts;

(c) Implications, for technical cooperation in statistics, of changes in UNDP and UNFPA policies relating to project execution, agency support costs and the UNFPA Technical Support Services System;

(d) The International Comparison Programme;

(e) International trade statistics;

(f) Environment statistics;

(g) Monitoring achievement of social goals in the 1990s;

(h) Preparations for the twenty-seventh session of the Statistical Commission.

VI. SUBCOMMITTEE ON NUTRITION

14. During 1992, SCN and its Advisory Group on Nutrition focused their work on further preparation for the International Conference on Nutrition scheduled for December of that year, which had been initiated by the Subcommittee three years previously and sponsored jointly by WHO and FAO. The vast agenda of the nineteenth session of SCN included, among other items, the world nutrition situation, micronutrient malnutrition, protein-energy malnutrition, food and nutrition in Africa, refugee nutrition, supplementary feeding in early childhood and household food security.

15. The annual symposium on nutritional issues held in conjunction with the SCN session formulated statements on two of the issues to be brought to the

attention of ACC, namely (a) nutrition, refugees and displaced persons and (b) benefits of preventing growth failure in early childhood. In the first statement, the Subcommittee recommended that ACC should make arrangements for a thorough review of the capacity of the United Nations system to ensure a more timely and effective response to the nutritional needs of refugees and displaced persons. The goals and objectives of agencies should include protecting and promoting the nutritional well-being of affected populations in terms of quantity and quality of food supplies; reporting to donor Governments and United Nations governing bodies; and strengthening the technical capacity of agencies in the area of nutrition. In the second statement, the Subcommittee stressed that growth failure in early childhood was the result of the common combination of inadequate child feeding, high rates of infection and poor child care.

16. The Subcommittee decided to include the following priorities in its work programme for 1992-1993:

(a) Reporting on the world nutrition situation;

(b) Assessing flows of external resources for nutrition;

(c) Review of country programmes;

(d) Holding of a Micronutrient Forum in February 1993;

(e) Support for the Working Group on Food Aid;

(f) Support for the Ad Hoc Group on Nutritional Surveillance;

(g) Feasibility study for future scenarios for nutrition.

VII. INTER-AGENCY CONSULTATION ON THE FOLLOW-UP TO THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES FOR THE 1990s

17. The second Inter-agency Consultation concentrated its attention on three major issues: (a) the overall role of the United Nations system in the implementation of and follow-up to the Programme of Action for Least Developed Countries for the 1990s; (b) recent developments regarding the global review and monitoring of the Programme; and (c) the current development outlook of the least developed countries.

18. The strategic approach for the United Nations system in the implementation of the Programme had been considered by CCSQ (OPS) and had foreseen three main tasks for the agencies: information and advocacy; policy advisory functions and resource mobilization; and the funding and delivery of agencies' own assistance programmes. ACC agreed with that approach and guidelines were issued to headquarters and field structures of United Nations system organizations.

19. A global review of the Programme of Action had been undertaken by UNCTAD and the principal outcomes of that review had been confirmed by the least developed countries and their development partners of commitments; recognition of the need for reassessment and readjustment of international support measures; identification of areas of priority; and finally, reaffirmation of existing

arrangements for follow-up to the implementation of the Programme. The follow-up arrangements at the regional and national levels were also considered by the Consultation.

20. In view of the worsening short- and medium-term development outlook for the least developed countries as a whole, it was recognized that the efforts of LDCs should be fully supported, particularly by organizations of the United Nations system, which had a major responsibility to ensure the adequate and timely implementation of the Programme of Action.

21. The Inter-agency Consultation made recommendations to ACC in the following areas:

(a) The resource situation of the least developed countries;

(b) Access to resources under UNDP intercountry programmes;

(c) AIDS and development of the least developed countries in the 1990s.

VIII. INTER-AGENCY GROUP ON NEW AND RENEWABLE SOURCES OF ENERGY

22. During 1992 the Inter-agency Group on New and Renewable Sources of Energy during 1992, focused much attention on coordination matters. At its eleventh session, the Group considered reports by FAO on the review of inter-agency cooperation; by UNDP on strategies for the dissemination of technologies; and by UNEP and INSTRAW on the interrelationship of energy and environment and the role of women in the field of new and renewable sources of energy. The Group agreed that there was a need to further strengthen existing and future channels of communication among different entities of the United Nations system, particularly through the regular exchange of information on their activities and cooperation in the preparation and servicing of the new Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development.

23. Among other issues considered by the Group were questions related to the mobilization of financial resources for the implementation of the Nairobi Programme of Action; the publication of the proceedings of the Expert Group on the role of new and renewable sources of energy in integrated rural development; and the future publication by the United Nations of the report on the direct conversion of solar energy to electricity.

IX. INTERSECRETARIAT GROUP FOR WATER RESOURCES

24. During 1992, the activities of the Group and its Steering Committee on Water Supply and Sanitation were focused on issues of cooperation and coordination concerning the implementation of the Mar del Plata Action Plan in the 1990s and issues concerning the freshwater resources component of Agenda 21. An International Conference on Water and the Environment had been convened by the organizations of the United Nations system through the Intersecretariat Group in January 1992, in preparation for UNCED.

25. At its thirteenth session, held in New York from 7-9 October 1992, the Group concentrated its attention, inter alia, on the monitoring and assessment of the world's freshwater resources; water resources and urban development; water resources and rural development; the management of water resources as a basis for sustainable development; and water public information and promotion as a component of water-related projects. The Group also discussed the question of its more active participation in the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction; the preparation of a multilingual glossary on water terms; and the proclamation and celebration of World Water Day. The Group has established working groups on the establishment of a system-wide integrated monitoring and assessment network and on water resources and urban development. In addition, an expert consultation on integrated rural water management is being organized by FAO, WHO, UNDP, UNICEF and the World Bank. The United Nations and the World Bank have been entrusted to prepare a strategy for action concerning integrated water resources development and management. The conclusions and recommendations of the Group and its Steering Committee were brought to the attention of the Administrative Committee on Coordination.

X. AD HOC INTER-AGENCY MEETING ON OUTER SPACE ACTIVITIES

26. The Ad Hoc Inter-agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities, held from 5-7 October 1992 in Paris, concentrated on the problem of coordinating activities within the United Nations system relating to outer space. The specific issues of the problem included implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82; the activities of United Nations system organizations in the area of space science and technology and its applications in accordance with their mandates; review of cooperation by organizations of the system in remote-sensing activities; and review and coordination of follow-up activities of organizations to International Space Year 1992. The Meeting also considered questions related to the follow-up to UNCED; the Second Space Conference of the Americas; possible implications of the ongoing restructuring of the United Nations Secretariat for the work of United Nations bodies involved in space activities; and other matters.

27. The Meeting discussed and made a number of suggestions regarding the draft annual report of the Secretary-General entitled "Coordination of outer space activities within the United Nations system, programmes of work for 1993, 1994 and future years", which was to be submitted to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. The draft report contained information on activities and programmes involving the applications of space technology in the fields of, inter alia, remote sensing of the Earth, communications, meteorology, navigation and disaster management. Planned activities also reflected some part of the efforts of organizations to implement the recommendations of UNISPACE 82.

28. Within the framework of the question of remote-sensing activities, the Meeting focused on future activities supported by the United Nations system in developing countries, including conferences, workshops and seminars on the applications of new and advanced systems; training and education programmes; institution-building; project formulation and execution; and exchange of information. In that context, the Meeting reviewed and endorsed inter-agency project documents, particularly on the subjects of (a) land-use and vegetation

cover in Africa; (b) the establishment of the United Nations Centres for Space Science and Technology Education in existing national/regional education centres; and (c) the establishment of satellite data centres and a regional centre in Latin America in the context of its Earthwatch programme.

29. With regard to the Second Space Conference of the Americas, scheduled for January 1993 in Chile, the Meeting expressed the opinion that it should have clear and well-defined objectives, in view of the fact that the results of the First Conference (1990) had yet to be implemented.

30. The participants of the Meeting agreed that they should continue their in-depth review of cooperation and coordination among the organizations of the United Nations system in some specific areas of space applications, in order to ensure that activities in those areas were meaningfully integrated and the services rendered to Member States fully met their requirements in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

XI. AD HOC INTER-AGENCY MEETING ON WOMEN

31. The main issues on the agenda of the 16th Ad Hoc Inter-agency Meeting on Women held in March 1992 were system-wide coordination; preparation of the reports on the priority themes for the Commission on the Status of Women; and preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women.

32. The Meeting agreed that the reporting mechanism with regard to system-wide monitoring of the progress made in the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women should be linked to the priority themes for equality, development and peace, as defined by the Commission. It was recommended that the organizations of the United Nations system should report on all their activities undertaken in the field in the quinquennial review and appraisal of the Strategies, and that the underlying concepts and quantified indicators for the reporting should be developed over the next two years.

33. It was suggested that the monitoring report, currently prepared on a biennial basis, should be replaced by inputs of organizations and agencies to reports on the priority themes presented each year to the Commission. The Meeting endorsed the priority themes chosen for the 1993 and 1994 reports to the Commission.

34. Having considered the question of preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, scheduled for 1995, the Meeting expressed the view that the Conference should have on its agenda issues discussed at the global level, such as international trade, finance and political issues, and that the Conference should be enabled to review comprehensively activities for women at the national, regional and global levels. It was proposed that it be determined how women's issues could be integrated into all agencies' priorities and that a summary of the socio-economic attainments of women be prepared for the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. The Meeting expressed its support for the proposed information programme for the Conference and requested the United Nations system to provide information for an inter-agency agenda of women's activities,

1994-1995, and to be actively involved in all international events culminating in the Conference itself. The Meeting adopted a general statement on the preparation of the Conference addressed to the Commission on the Status of Women and the Administrative Committee on Coordination.

XII. AD HOC INTER-AGENCY MEETING ON THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE FAMILY

35. The agenda of the second Ad Hoc Inter-agency Meeting on the International Year of the Family, held in March 1992, included assessment of progress made by organizations and agencies of the United Nations system in preparation for the International Year of the Family (1994); inter-agency cooperation and coordination concerning the Year, with particular emphasis on joint projects, internationally and in all regions of the world; review of the ways and means of highlighting preparations for the Year in the context of major international events in 1992 (UNCED, the tenth anniversary of the International Plan of Action on Ageing and the end of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons); and the participation of non-governmental organizations in activities of the United Nations related to the Year.

36. Among the principal recommendations made by the Meeting were:

(a) Policy-making bodies of United Nations system organizations and agencies should consider including an agenda item on the Year in their 1992, 1993 or 1994 sessions and, as appropriate, should programme elements for the observance and follow-up to the Year in their programme budgets for 1994 and 1995;

(b) The role and functions of regional commissions in preparations for the Year should be strengthened, inter alia, by setting up ad hoc inter-agency task forces at the regional level;

(c) Promotional and information activities for the Year should be considered at the forthcoming session of JUNIC;

(d) Financial and substantive resources should be made available by United Nations agencies for the production of an information kit on the Year and a world atlas on families.

XIII. INTER-AGENCY MEETING ON THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF DISABLED PERSONS

37. The tenth Inter-agency Meeting on the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, held in December 1992, concentrated its attention on the following issues: (a) review of the achievements of the Decade and a preview of the future; (b) long-term strategy to the year 2000 and beyond; (c) United Nations Task Force on Disabled Children and Women; and (d) follow-up to the Ninth Inter-agency Meeting on the Decade.

38. With regard to the achievements of the Decade, the Meeting, inter alia, discussed the outcome of the special plenary meeting of the forty-seventh

session of the General Assembly to mark the conclusion of the Decade; considered future inter-agency meetings on disability issues with the purpose of reviewing and suggesting ways and means to consolidate and build upon the Decade's achievements, and proposed terms of reference for such future meetings; made some recommendations on cooperation with international non-governmental organizations; and discussed the question of technical cooperation in the field of disability. It was agreed that the two main achievements of the Decade within the United Nations system had been the adoption of the 1983 ACC policy statement on the employment of the disabled and the promulgation in 1989 of a plan to improve employment opportunities for disabled persons within the Secretariat.

39. The Meeting considered the report of the Expert Group Meeting on a Long-term Strategy to Further the Implementation of the World Programme of Action for Disabled Persons to the Year 2000 and Beyond, held in April 1992, and made recommendations on further strengthening the Strategy document and setting clearer priorities within specific time-frames, prior to the submission of the Strategy to the Commission for Social Development.

40. The Meeting welcomed the launching of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002, and took note of the Agenda for Action for that Decade.

XIV. AD HOC INTER-AGENCY MEETING ON COORDINATION IN MATTERS OF INTERNATIONAL DRUG ABUSE CONTROL

41. During 1992, two Ad Hoc Inter-agency Meetings on Coordination in Matters of International Drug Abuse Control were convened. The major issue considered by both meetings was the necessity to strengthen coordination of all United Nations drug control activities in the light of growing recognition of the negative impact of drugs on the economic development process. United Nations entities were invited to play a more active role in the various aspects of the drug abuse problem, to make drug control one of the permanent parts of their policy and to further coordinate their activities with those of UNDCP.

42. The Meeting, held in April 1988, reviewed the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Drug Abuse Control and requested participants to communicate to UNDCP their comments on the revised version of the Action Plan, to be discussed at the next Meeting. In September 1992, a revised text of the Action Plan was introduced which contained a new chapter, entitled "Multisectoral activities", based on contributions from the agencies. It was agreed that the Action Plan should be kept under regular review in the future and that the final text of the Plan should be submitted to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its thirty-sixth session, in 1993.

43. Among other important items included in the agenda of the Inter-agency Meetings were the United Nations Decade Against Drug Abuse and the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (26 June); inter-agency collaboration on demand reduction programmes; review of the draft report of the Secretary-General on international cooperation in drug abuse control, to be submitted to the General Assembly; and selection of substantive themes to be considered by future Meetings.

44. In addressing matters related to the Decade, the Meeting underscored, inter alia:

(a) The importance of timely distribution of information material, particularly in developing countries;

(b) The usefulness of visual presentations on drug abuse control;

(c) The need to strengthen cooperative ties with non-governmental organizations;

(d) The potential for supportive and preventive work among refugees and returnees.

45. With reference to annual themes for the observance of the Day, it was suggested that broad topics be selected in order to permit the largest possible number of agencies to participate, taking into account their respective mandates.

46. While highlighting the need for intensified measures for demand reduction, there was unequivocal recognition that coping effectively with the drug abuse phenomenon required a comprehensive, balanced and multidisciplinary approach, addressing all aspects of drug abuse and illicit trafficking. In that regard, a draft Demand Reduction Strategy prepared by UNDCP was considered by the Inter-agency Meeting.